

or information provided by, a county or State FSA committee or an authorized representative of such committee and the participant acted, or failed to act, as a result of the Agency action or information. This part does not apply to cases where the participant had sufficient reason to know that the action or information upon which they relied was improper or erroneous or where the participant acted in reliance on their own misunderstanding or misinterpretation of program provisions, notices or information.

§ 718.304 Failure to fully comply.

(a) Under a covered program, when the failure of a participant to fully comply with the terms and conditions of a program authorized by this chapter precludes the providing of payments or benefits, relief may be authorized in accordance with § 718.305 if the participant made a good faith effort to comply fully with the requirements of the covered program.

(b) This section only applies to participants who are determined by the FSA approval official to have made a good faith effort to comply fully with the terms and conditions of the program and rendered substantial performance.

§ 718.305 Forms of relief.

(a) The Administrator of FSA, Executive Vice President of CCC, or their designee, may authorize a participant in a covered program to:

(1) Retain loans, payments, or other benefits received under the covered program;

(2) Continue to receive loans, payments, and other benefits under the covered program;

(3) Continue to participate, in whole or in part, under any contract executed under the covered program;

(4) In the case of a conservation program, re-enroll all or part of the land covered by the program; and

(5) Receive such other equitable relief as determined to be appropriate.

(b) As a condition of receiving relief under this subpart, the participant may be required to remedy their failure to meet the program requirement, or mitigate its affects.

§ 718.306 Finality.

(a) A determination by a State or county FSA committee made on or after October 13, 1994, becomes final and binding 90 days from the date the application for benefits has been filed, and supporting documentation required to be supplied by the producer as a condition for eligibility for the particular program has been filed, unless one of the following conditions exist:

(1) The participant has requested an administrative review of the determination in accordance with part 780 of this chapter;

(2) The determination was based on misrepresentation, false statement, fraud, or willful misconduct by or on behalf of the participant;

(3) The determination was modified by the Administrator, FSA, or in the case of CCC programs conducted under Chapter XIV of this title, the Executive Vice President, CCC; or

(4) The participant had reason to know that the determination was erroneous.

(b) Should an erroneous determination become final under the provisions of this section, it shall only be effective through the year in which the error was found and communicated to the participant.

§ 718.307 Special relief approval authority for State Executive Directors.

(a) *General nature of the special authority.* Notwithstanding provisions in this subpart providing supervision and relief authority to other officials, an SED without further review by other officials (other than the Secretary) may grant relief to a participant under the provisions of §§ 718.303 and 718.304 as if the SED were the final arbiter within the agency of such matters so long as:

(1) The program matter with respect to which the relief is sought is a program matter in a covered program which is operated within the State under the control of the SED;

(2) The total amount of relief which will be provided to the person (that is, to the individual or entity that applies for the relief) by that SED under this special authority for errors during that year is less than \$20,000 (including in that calculation, any loan amount or

other benefit of any kind payable for that year and any other year);

(3) The total amount of such relief which has been previously provided to the participant using this special authority for errors in that year, as calculated above, is not more than \$5,000;

(4) The total amount of loans, payments, and benefits of any kind for which relief is provided to similarly situated participants by the SED (or the SED's predecessor) for errors for any year under the authority provided in this section, as calculated above, is not more than \$1,000,000.

(b) *Report of the exercise of the power.* A grant of relief shall be considered to be under this section and subject to the special finality provided in this section only if the SED grants the relief in writing when granting the relief to the party who will receive the benefit of such relief and only if, in that document, the SED declares that they are exercising that power. The SED must report the exercise of that power to the Deputy Administrator so that a full accounting may be made in keeping with the limitations of this section. Absent such a report, relief will not be considered to have been made under this section.

(c) *Additional limits on the authority.* The authority provided under this section does not extend to:

(1) The administration of payment limitations under part 1400 of this chapter (§§ 1001 to 1001F of 7 U.S.C. 1308 *et seq.*);

(2) The administration of payment limitations under a conservation program administered by the Secretary; or

(3) Highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements under subtitles B or C of Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3811 *et seq.*) as administered under 7 CFR part 12.

(d) Relief may not be provided by the SED under this section until a written opinion or written acknowledgment is obtained from OGC that grounds exist for determination that the program participant has, in good faith, detrimentally relied on the guidance or actions of an authorized FSA representative in accordance with the provisions of this subpart, or that the producer otherwise failed, in good faith, to

fully comply with the requirements of the program and that the granting of the relief is within the lawful authority of the SED.

(e) *Relation to other authorities.* The authority provided under this section is in addition to any other applicable authority that may allow relief. Generally, the SED may, without consultation other than with OGC, decide all matters under \$20,000 but those decisions shall not be subject to modification within the Farm Service Agency to the extent provided for under the rules of this section.

PART 723—TOBACCO

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